

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

Traditional Ethos and Asian Modernization: Indonesia and the Philippines

Review Author: Ricardo G. Abad

Philippine Studies vol. 28, no. 1 (1980) 116–117

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

became a model for the provincial cabeceras which grew up in the course of time. Reed traces the evolution of Intramuros from a palisaded town of nipa and bamboo to the fortified city of stone buildings which had come into existence by the end of the sixteenth century. Alongside this Spanish city, and increasingly integrated with it, were the *arrabales* or suburban towns of Extramuros, inhabited by Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and mestizos, in which the primate city exercised its Hispanizing and urbanizing influence.

Though the monograph is based on standard secondary sources and the known accounts of Blair and Robertson, it has marshalled the familiar factual data for a study of the beginnings of Hispanic Philippines from the point of view of the process and forms of urbanization. Well grounded in all the relevant bibliography, Reed has succeeded in giving a new dimension to the early years of Spanish settlement. This careful study of Manila's rise will be of interest not only to geographers but to historians and others as well.

John N. Schumacher, S.J.

TRADITIONAL ETHOS AND ASIAN MODERNIZATION: INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES. Research Series on Asian Modernization, No. II. Prepared by the Society for the Study of Asian Ethos. Nagoya, Japan: School of Medicine, Fujitaguken University, 1976. 70 pages.

In 1974, an interdisciplinary team of six Japanese scholars visited two South-east Asian countries to examine how traditional beliefs and practices thrive as societies modernize. Three of these scholars went to Indonesia and conducted their study in two villages of Central Java and Bali. The other three went to the Philippines and pursued their inquiry in Victorias, Tarlac, and Davao City. Earlier, the researchers undertook a related investigation in Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Soon, as the foreword indicates, they will go to Korea and Taiwan to gather similar data.

This monograph presents the results of the Indonesian and Philippine study. The first three essays deal with Indonesia, specifically the characteristics of the Javanese family, the religious situation, and selected agricultural practices. The last three focus on the Philippines and pay attention to the characteristics of the social structure, forms of community cooperation, and assorted religious practices. All the articles are brief, descriptive pieces which provide many informative details; but save one, these articles break no new paths. In this one article, titled "The Barrio Community as a Cooperative Entity in Central Luzon," the author, Kimitoshi Murakami, systematically argues that because Filipinos do not hold common lands, they have developed other sources of material and mutual cooperation. Chief of these sources are kinship (*magkamag-anak* and *magkasam-bahay*), neighboring (*magkapit-bahay*), and group religious worship. Murakami also observes the

presence of a gap between government-sponsored development programs and the more immediate needs of farmers. He concludes that development programs will succeed only if they stimulate the "voluntary energies of the peasants" and enhance traditional forms of mutual cooperation.

Several reasons account for the monograph's limited contribution to the social science literature. For one, the researchers spent only three months doing field work in each country. Some scholars would consider the time adequate only if baseline data has been collected and the literature reviewed. However, judging from the introduction and footnotes, neither of these prior tasks were fully met. Moreover, no attempt was made to link the various cultural details into a theoretical framework. Thus, while readers become acquainted with the survival of the *slamatang* (public eating habits) in Central Java or the persistence of superstitious beliefs in the Philippines, there remains the difficulty of gaining an overall picture. A chapter which integrates the Indonesian and Philippine findings is sadly lacking; in the absence of a theoretical framework, this could have pooled related data on family patterns, religious expressions, and the impact of modernization of these institutional traits. As it is, more comparisons are made between Japan and either Indonesia or the Philippines than between Indonesia and the Philippines.

The book could have used a little more editing, if only to eliminate amusing references to the "Molo-Molo" as a traditional Filipino dramatic form or to "Marshal Law" as a label describing a country's political condition. Its overall quality can also serve as a lesson for subsequent researches in foreign territories. If studies are intended to promote greater cross-cultural understanding, there is no substitute for more careful preparation, deeper probing, and wider contact with local scholars.

Ricardo G. Abad

TREE. By F. Sionil Jose, Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1978. 133 pages.

The past both remote and immediate has always haunted the consciousness of the Filipino writer in English. It is as if by peering closely into the by-gone years, he may extract from the past some insights that might help him understand the present. This preoccupation may be discerned in the writings of Nick Joaquin, Wilfredo Nollado, among others. An aspect of the same theme is embodied in the works of noted writer F. Sionil Jose.

Subtitled *Love and Death in a Small Filipino Town*, Sionil Jose's *Tree* chronicles the early years of the narrator, now a middle-aged man whose life "had been built on a rubble of compromise and procrastination." He views those years and affords the reader glimpses of the various characters and situations one ordinarily comes across in a small town. What appears then is a